



National Fire Protection Association

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SEP 23 2004

September 7, 2004

The Honorable John B. Larson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Larson:

On behalf of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), I would like to thank you for introducing the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act of 2004, H.R. 4967 and express NFPA's support for the bill. Fire Sprinklers are a crucial life safety measure, especially given the nature of residents of skilled nursing homes. NFPA President, James Shannon, has called for the installation of sprinkler systems in nursing homes. It is the right thing to do and your legislation will increase the safety of those most vulnerable to fire.

The evidence shows us that automatic fire sprinkler systems save lives. NFPA statistics show no record of a multiple death fire in nursing facility equipped with an operational fire sprinkler system. Tragically, in 2003, sixteen residents of a nursing home in Hartford lost their lives and in a similar tragedy in Nashville, fifteen patients' lives were claimed. Neither facility had fire sprinkler systems.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) estimates that 25% of all nursing homes do not have fire sprinkler systems. Your legislation provides the financial assistance necessary, through Medicare and Medicaid payment, for skilled nursing facilities to install life saving automatic fire sprinkler systems.

Again, thank you for introducing this important and life saving legislation. We look forward to working with you to win its passage.

Sincerely,

John C. Biechman
Vice President
Government Affairs